

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed November 14, 2006, which has been reviewed and carefully considered. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

By means of the present amendment, FIG 2A has been amended to change a duplicate reference numeral "25" to --27--, in conformance with the specification, such as page 4, lines 15, 17 and 22. A replacement sheet including FIG 2A is enclosed. Applicants respectfully request approval of the enclosed proposed drawing change.

By means of the present amendment, the current Abstract has been deleted and substituted with the enclosed New Abstract which better conforms to U.S. practice. Further, the specification has been amended for better conformance to U.S. practice.

By means of the present amendment, claims 1-9 have been amended for better conformance to U.S. practice, such as beginning the dependent claims with 'The' instead of 'A', and changing "characterized in that" to --wherein--. Claims 1-9 were not

amended in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

In the Office Action, claims 1-7 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. 5,550,657 (Tanaka). Further, claims 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Tanaka in view of U.S. 6,568,820 (Ohkawa). It is respectfully resubmitted that claims 1-9 and 11-16 are patentable over Tanaka and Ohkawa for at least the following reasons.

Tanaka is directed to a liquid crystal display (LCD) device that includes a planar illumination unit (see item 3 in FIG 1) having one or more tubular light sources 21a, 21b, shown in FIG 3, where input light enters a light guide 23. The input light is provided directly from the tubular light sources 21a, 21b, as well as from reflectors 24a and 24b around the tubular light sources 21a, 21b.

As recited on column 6, lines 66-67 a light scattering plane 30 is provided on one surface of the light guide 23, where a prismatic film 26 is provided between the light scattering plane 30 and the light guide 23. As recited on column 1, lines 57-62 the

light scattering plane typically has a milky whitish appearance to scatter light and provide uniform illumination of the LCD panel.

In rejecting claim 10, FIG 3 and column 7, lines 66-67 of Tanaka are cited to allegedly show light absorbing means 22a. It is respectfully submitted that reference numeral 22a in FIG 3 of Tanaka is a holder that carries a reflector 24a, as specifically recited on column 6, lines 5-6. As clearly shown in FIG 3, most of the holder 22a is covered with the reflector 24a, thus the holder is little exposed and thus may only slightly absorb light from the tubular light source 21a.

Assuming, arguendo, that the holder 22a is an absorber of light, it is respectfully submitted that any light absorbed by the holder 22a is light provided from the tubular light source 21a.

In stark contrast, the present invention as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claim 11, amongst other patentable elements requires (illustrative emphasis provided):

light absorbing means adjacent said non-random light-scattering structure and configured to absorb light scattered from said non-random light-scattering structure.

It is respectfully submitted that a light absorber which is configured to absorb light scattered from a light-scattering structure is nowhere taught or suggested in Tanaka. Rather, at best, Tanaka teaches a light absorber that absorbs light from the light source. The allegedly Tanaka light absorber 22a does not absorb any light scattered from the light-scattering plate 30.

Ohkawa is cited in rejecting dependent claims to allegedly show other features, and does not remedy the deficiencies of Tanaka.

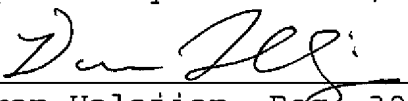
Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that independent claims 1 and 11 be allowed. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-9 and 12-16 should also be allowed based at least on their dependence from independent claims 1 and 11.

Claims 3 and 13 also include patentable subject matter. In particular, Tanaka merely teaches a light-scattering film 26 (FIG 3) to uniformly illuminate a rectangular LCD panel shown in FIG 1. A light-scattering structure that includes at least one array of concentric circular indentations centered on the optical axis, as recited in claims 3 and 13, is nowhere taught or suggested in Tanaka.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: Replacement drawing sheet (1 sheet including FIG 2A)
New Abstract

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